

**Meeting Topic: Achieving optimal public involvement for balanced, integrated management of the Tennessee River System.**

**1. What are your comments on TVA's approach to public involvement?**

- A. ROS methods with comment stations and no microphone were very effective. ROS is a good model, but this approach needs to reach higher levels at TVA.
- B. Water Quality subcommittee of RRSC was a useful and informative process.
- C. TVA's Resource Stewardship Group's attitude and approach toward public involvement are good, based on TVA's presentation to RRSC.
- D. Relationship building (one-on-one) is beneficial to public involvement process.
- E. ROS had public participation embedded into the process from the beginning to ID, develop, etc. alternatives in the spirit of the IAP2 principles, this spectrum approach works well because expectations were set from the beginning.
- F. ROS Public Review Group (PRG) meetings were effective as well as 2<sup>nd</sup> round of ROS meetings; however, RRSC recommendations for public involvement and oversight committee of the ROS were not fully met because the process preceded formation of the PRG. TVA did take the advice of the council on this process.
- G. TVA (and other federal agencies) have not traditionally listened to the public effectively.
- H. While the RRSC has observed that some parts of TVA, members of the current Board, and TVA's Resource Stewardship Group have changed their attitude and approaches towards public involvement, this is not consistent with other parts of TVA and TVA's image. All levels of TVA need to be informed and involved of the approach and shift in attitude.
- I. There is a credibility gap and not enough trust of TVA by stakeholders. All parts of TVA need to be involved in changes to include public involvement in their decision-making activities to address the credibility gap and gain stakeholder trust.
- J. Stakeholder involvement should include more than data gathering, but should also address how the data is used, and a closed-loop communication process back to the stakeholder.
- K. Change and getting input from the public has been painful in the past. Trend is towards improvements in the public participation process to make it highly effective and less painful. Some segments of TVA have made improvements and there are more opportunities for improvement throughout the agency.

**2. What other public involvement techniques should TVA investigate?**

- A. Input from the general public is difficult to obtain, public officials (Mayors, Chambers of Commerce) need to understand importance to be involved, but it's difficult to get them involved.

- B. Have a team talk to/work with local officials prior to initiating a public involvement process in a community (Closed-loop communication-here's what we learned).
- C. IAP2 Techniques-Public Participation Spectrum
- D. Utilize innovative technology for management of meetings (computers, etc.)
- E. Make use of the expertise that has supported the RRSC sub-committees for specific issues (e.g. water quality sub-committee). Served as a focus group and should continue to use them in the future.
- F. Continue feedback and communication with participants (e.g. computer assisted meetings, internet, email databases)
- G. Set up 'mall kiosks' (or Walmart) with support of organizations, towns, distributors, etc. to reach audience not regularly involved.
- H. Improve TVA website to be more user-friendly, making it easier for general public to contact TVA, and to find the information they are looking for.

### **3. What are your suggestions for improving TVA's approach to public involvement?**

- A. TVA needs to establish a good training program on public participation (objectives: inform staff of the importance of public input, respect public opinions and time.)
- B. Public involvement is not always necessary or possible in a crisis situation, but public should understand potential crisis situation policies ahead of time. Proactively involve the public in the contingency planning process and report to them following a crisis situation.
- C. Use tools for public involvement internally to educate staff and to develop better external involvement processes.
- D. Build trust with the public by using the IAP2 approach, to build and strengthen long-term relationships to assure participants don't feel forgotten.
- E. Have relationships already in place to shorten the amount of time spent in a process.
- F. Project budgeting process and forms need to include the public relations/public involvement process. Assure that consideration of public involvement is a part of the project planning process.
- G. Public relations and responsiveness need to be a part of the career performance process to support cultural change, and to support disciplinary action when appropriate.
- H. Assure employees know they work for the customer.
- I. Establish leadership in areas of TVA, in addition to natural resources, to affect the cultural change regarding transparency of public involvement processes, to assure it affects the entire agency.
- J. TVA's leadership's attitude and approach to public involvement needs to be improved and communicated throughout the agency to initiate a cultural change in the agency (objective: address questions about whether TVA really listens).

- K. TVA should accept the importance of and realize the benefits of public involvement to both TVA as well as the public (objective: be responsive to the public).
- L. Rate change process should be more like the ROS process. Changes in approaches to public involvement should be applied across the agency, positively affecting the agency's image.
- M. TVA should evaluate joining the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) organization (values, spectrum, etc.).